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ACTION IN EDUCATION

A PUBLICATION FOR COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

FALL 2020

Rochele Royster's "Dolls 4 Peace," an installation made by schoolchildren in response to gun violence, was a Stockyard Institute project.



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Stepping Up Together

The College of Education (COE) continues to step up, and I couldn't be prouder.

In early March, 15% of our faculty were teaching online. A week later, responding rapidly to the COVID-19 pandemic, 100% were doing so. They sought supplemental training that raised their online teaching to the highest level and helped students sharpen their remote learning skills. Our course evaluations for last spring remained virtually identical to those of previous spring quarters. We consistently updated our students as the landscape shifted, sometimes every few days. We created communities so our students could better connect with each other and the college. Unsolicited testimonials poured in, praising the work of our faculty and staff, not only in the classroom, but on behalf of communities across Chicago that needed it the most.

Through our alumni network and school partnerships, we've been analyzing the current needs of teachers, students and parents with regard to virtual learning, and we are working to help bridge the digital gaps. I am proud of our faculty for rising to this incredible occasion, asking "What must be done?" and committing themselves to answer the call. I am proud of our staff for tackling projects collectively and providing our students with expert advising, communications, academic and technical support, and encouragement. We continue to work with our recent graduates to help them navigate the challenges in their new positions.

COE has also met other critical challenges head-on and collaboratively. We've engaged in difficult but critical conversations about anti-racism and how we can better support and empower one other. I am proud that we have a diverse student body, faculty and leadership, which we continue to support and strengthen.



We've been reexamining our college's mission and asking how it reflects our values and goals.

Together, we will find a way. That's a simple truth that also guided us during the nation's recent election angst. Social-emotional learning and counseling is an intrinsic part of our pedagogy, and that expertise helped support opportunities for students, faculty and staff to process their feelings prior to and after the election. For example, we provided a self-care toolkit for faculty, students and the university at large that people could use, if they desired, in their personal lives and their classroom and counseling settings. In this issue you will read about some other actions we have taken to help mitigate the challenges of 2020 and beyond.

If you would like to join the phenomenal initiatives taking part at the college, please connect with us. The future may be uncertain, but we have faith this generation of students will make the world a better place. I'm thankful for the remarkable alumni and friends of the college who have generously given their time and support for the sake of our students. I hope you and your loved ones are safe, healthy and persevering. Let's keep moving forward together.

Dean Paul Zions

Office of Alumni Relations
alumni.depaul.edu

College of Education
education.depaul.edu
smagnuso@depaul.edu

Editor
Craig Keller

Designer
Vimal Kachhia

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Alumni on ISCA Race and Equity Committee

Kirsten Perry (MEd '11), president of the Illinois School Counselor Association (ISCA), convened the association's first race and equity steering committee. The committee will recommend anti-racist and equitable practices and will help develop a race and equity credential members can earn through free ISCA training. Associate Professor of Counseling Melissa Ockerman, Brian Coleman (MEd '14) and Alicia Funes (MEd '15) also serve on the committee.



AUSL Partnership

Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL), a nonprofit organization that manages more than 30 Chicago public schools, has formed an exclusive partnership with COE for its Chicago Teacher Residency program. The program provides teacher preparation and a master's degree to participants who commit to teach in an AUSL-managed school for at least four years. The current cohort includes more than 70 candidates in special education and elementary, middle school and secondary education. They began the program at DePaul this past summer and are following an accelerated course schedule that can be completed in 12 months.

Honors and Awards

Nicole Axe (EDU '20) was awarded a Fulbright teaching scholarship, which will support her planned trip to Greece to research elementary education.

Stephanie Berryhill (EDU '15), a Chicago Public Schools special education teacher and former COE academic advisor, won DePaul's [Gerald Paetsch Academic Advising Award](#) for her service at DePaul in the 2019–20 school year.

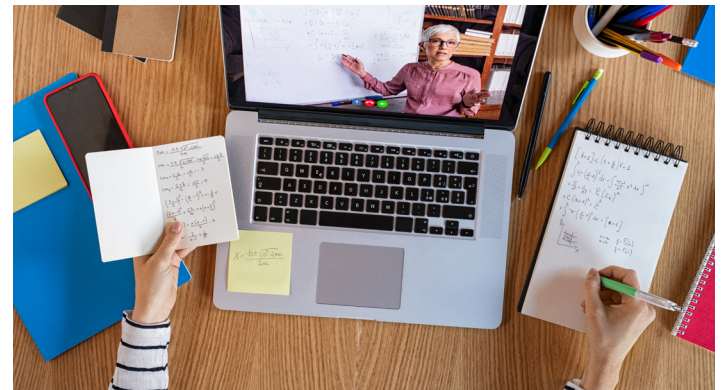
Jazmin Brito, a Bilingual-Bicultural Education program student and [BiLD Lab](#) research assistant, won the DePaul Student Employee of the Year Award.

Visit [College News and Features](#) to stay up to date on current and future COE news.



Global Conversations

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit, faculty and staff from COE and DePaul's Office of Global Engagement have facilitated several "Global Conversations" via Zoom with 10 other institutions in Australia, Brazil, India, Mexico, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. These 90-minute sessions, part of the ongoing program series, give students around the world an opportunity to connect and reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in their lives and how it has affected various academic disciplines and industries.



Pandemic Response Portal

COE has created a [COE Responds to COVID-19](#) web portal that lets faculty, staff and students share their expertise in remote teaching, learning, school leadership and counseling. The portal is open not only to students, but also to K–12 teachers, school counselors, community organizations and the public.



DePaul WORKS

DePaul WORKS is a new COE program in which 10 counseling student interns provide career and wellness coaching in English and Spanish via a phone hotline to essential workers and individuals whose jobs have been affected or eliminated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Led by Associate Professor of Counseling Rebecca Michel and housed within the Education and

Counseling Center, the service receives referrals from 16 workforce development nonprofits associated with [Chicago's Community Based Organization Collective](#).

Building Up the Arts

A multimillion-dollar gift will help support the Stockyard Institute and visual art teacher education at DePaul

Jim Duignan, community gardener Shelly Hope and educator Lavie Raven discuss outdoor arts programming near a mural by Raven and Rahmaan Statik.

A citywide arts initiative that works with underresourced communities will be able to widen its reach thanks to a generous new gift. The Stockyard Institute, described by its leaders as a “social practice project that uses relationships as the material,” was founded 25 years ago by Jim Duignan, an artist, associate professor, and founder and chair of the college’s Visual Art Education program. DePaul received \$3 million in gifts from the Weitz Family Foundation of Omaha and the estate of the late Justina Tzeng to benefit and expand the Stockyard Institute program and visual art teacher education, with another \$2 million expected through a matching gift challenge issued by the Weitz Family Foundation. Weitz Foundation Executive Director Katie Weitz, PhD (MEd ’99), studied under Duignan, and the two have continued collaborating over the years.

Weitz says that the foundation’s gift is designed to help Stockyard Institute continue its unique approach to social justice. “DePaul is a social justice institution, and I think the way that the Stockyard Institute interacts with aspiring teachers, as well as students, is really in the mode of social justice,” says Weitz. “What we hope is that this gift helps continue Jim’s legacy of communicating and challenging people to think differently and to understand their ability to produce and make meaning out of their lives in ways that can touch other people.”

The funding, Duignan hopes, will benefit countless neighborhood art projects in Chicago.

In 1995, Duignan designed an arts program in a new, experimental middle school, San

Miguel School Chicago, in the Back of the Yards neighborhood. He had the freedom to teach his 10 students, who had dropped out of other schools, in any way he chose. He decided to let the students, who were all touched by gang activity, set the tone. They came up with their own questions based on how they perceived the city and explored those questions through art. In addition to learning about inquiry and materials, they also formed strong relationships with each other and with their own neighborhood.

“When we got to know each other really well, one of the kids said to me that his biggest fear was being shot in the back accidentally on his way to school,” says Duignan. “So we quickly devised this idea that we could be a design collective. We could be a group of individuals who worked together, exploring a project or proposal or anything.” The result? The class designed a fully armor-plated outfit that could withstand stray gunfire. They called it a gangproof suit.

Stockyard Institute would take on a life of its own as Duignan found opportunities to work with schools, community centers, cultural organizations and artists in other historically neglected neighborhoods like Austin and North Lawndale. Over the years, the projects, which are chosen by the community and designed to foster a sense of creative pride and togetherness, have led to gallery exhibits, publications, performances, educational events, radio broadcasts and several student-led and community-driven radio stations.

Even as the founder of Stockyard Institute, Duignan admits that it’s challenging to fully describe the initiative. It’s a far cry from a

"DePAUL IS A SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTITUTION, AND I THINK THE WAY THAT THE STOCKYARD INSTITUTE INTERACTS WITH ASPIRING TEACHERS, AS WELL AS STUDENTS, IS REALLY IN THE MODE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE."

—Katie Weitz, PhD (MEd '99)

traditional art program, where students are taught technical skills and you can count the number of participants. As an artists' project, Stockyard Institute aims to be a catalyst that sparks and carries creative energy from one person to another, bringing together a collaborative network of artists, teachers and other cultural workers from all corners of the city to effect civic change.

Faculty member Rachel Harper, who is Stockyard Institute's assistant director and an artist, says Stockyard Institute is unique in its flexibility. Rather than aiming to mold students to fit within an existing framework, the framework itself responds to the students and the neighborhood through creativity and connection. "People often only approach Chicago neighborhoods as places that need to be fixed. The tradition of Stockyard Institute has been about really knowing neighborhoods and understanding that each community is rich with cultural and educational methods that are natural to individuals and families," she says. When Stockyard Institute goes into a neighborhood, says Harper, "the neighborhood is the program."

Lavie Raven (EDU '96) says Duignan was one of his mentors at DePaul and describes him as an arts activist, or an "artist." "He's an artist, and he's active in the community and putting out the goods in some ways. When I say the goods I mean, let's create. What do you want to make? What does the community want to do? Let me see if I can get it," says Raven, who is a Fulbright Distinguished Teacher, an English and social studies teacher at Oak Park and River Forest



Photo by Michelle Litvin

Collaborators convene to plan "Pedagogical Factory," a community arts series at the Hyde Park Art Center, where Duignan brought Stockyard Institute-inspired programming in 2007.

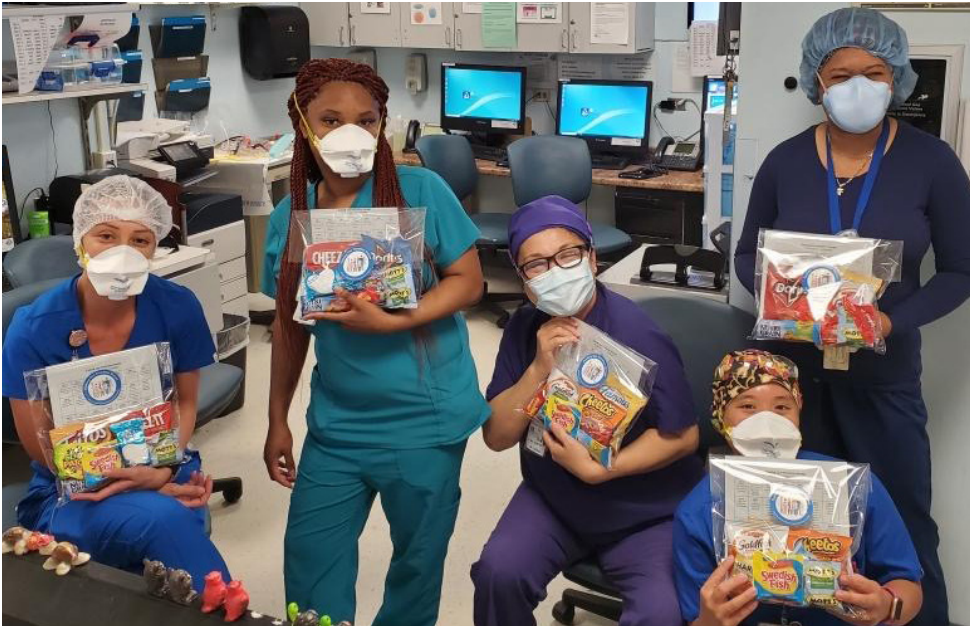


Duignan and Rachel Harper highlight community assets in partnership initiatives.

High School, a lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and co-founder of the University of Hip Hop, an interdisciplinary school of street art.

When Raven thinks about Duignan's work and his influence, he thinks about wildflower seeds that sprout and spread in overlooked communities. He says, "Jim sowed those seeds, and now you're seeing those seeds actually come back and say, 'We appreciate the relationship you created and the presence you offered and the things that you did. Let's do it again. Let's do it bigger.'"

All Together Now



Staff at Chicago's Norwegian American Hospital received self-care snack packs through a COE initiative.

"Just doing a little something for yourself each day can make a huge difference. We wanted to show we appreciate them, make their day and make them feel good."

—Mara Pollard (MEd '20)

As the pandemic alters lives, COE devises solutions that benefit others and build community

COE's preservice teachers nearing graduation normally undergo 10 weeks of student teaching in a Chicago-area classroom as the final learning experience before they take charge of their own classrooms. COVID-19's arrival deprived many students of that critical in-person training last spring. To help teacher candidates from the 2019–20 academic year transition into their professional careers during a pandemic, the college has provided them with ongoing one-to-one mentoring and instructional tools and resources.

"Student teaching is the ultimate culminating and empowering experience," says Barbara Rieckhoff, associate dean of curriculum and programs. "Students look forward to the opportunity to spend time in a classroom learning from a veteran teacher, getting to know a group of students and being part of the routines of each day of teaching."

While the college was able to pivot to online learning with most courses, rethinking student teaching presented more of a challenge.

"While some of the candidates were able to get into classrooms virtually, in most cases this was not possible, and candidates used video clips to learn from watching others teach," says Rieckhoff. "Knowing that student teaching represents such a critical piece of a teacher's preparation, Dean Paul Zions offered to provide support for this group that missed out on it."

COE surveyed graduates to identify areas in which they thought they needed the most help, with topics such as classroom

management, lesson planning and supporting underserved students at the top of the list. Graduates were invited to participate in a mentoring and coaching program, Teaching Strategies and Resources 2020, starting with online, self-paced modules to review the fundamentals in those identified areas of need. Each graduate was partnered with a COE faculty mentor for weekly, virtual mentoring sessions throughout the fall term. They've also been invited to join monthly, online, workshop-style sessions that faculty present on additional topics. Sessions such as Beyond Classroom Management and Thinking and Teaching About Race have also provided opportunities to network with fellow new teachers.

The Education and Counseling Center (ECC) has also been a hub for programs connecting the college to people in need.

Shifting all sessions online has enabled the ECC to expand its counseling and tutoring services, provided by graduate students and supervised by COE faculty, to clients far beyond campus.

Mara Pollard (MEd '20) epitomized COE's community-engagement ethos with Fueling Our Frontline Heroes, a GoFundMe initiative the counseling program alumna organized through the ECC last May before she graduated. Pollard distributed nearly 1,000 snack packs containing a 30-day self-care challenge card to health care workers at three safety-net hospitals. Activities listed on the card, from "listen to your favorite music for 15 minutes" to "choose a positive affirmation to carry with you throughout the day," offered the workers simple-to-practice mental health activities.

"Just doing a little something for yourself each day can make a huge difference," says Pollard. "We wanted to show we appreciate them, make their day and make them feel good."

A COE-led program for Catholic school teachers fills the social-emotional learning gap at underserved schools

Cultures of Care

Teaching always involves a certain amount of stress to juggle the myriad demands of students, family members and administrative requirements. During these challenging times of pandemic and social unrest, it has become even more stressful and complex.

The Department of Counseling and Special Education and Office of Innovative Professional Learning (OIPL) are working with 20 Catholic K–12 schools in Chicago to provide educators training in social-emotional learning (SEL) and wellness. Sister Mary Paul McCaughey, O.P., the archdiocese's former superintendent of schools and a COE faculty member, and Barbara Rieckhoff, associate dean and former Catholic school principal, helped OIPL connect the dots to launch the program.

Named COR (Catholic Outreach and Resources and Latin for "heart"), the initiative began as an OIPL microcredential program. The schools are located in low-income, under-resourced communities where emotional support services may be lacking.

"Catholic schools, in general, don't have as many counseling and mental health resources as they need or deserve," says OIPL Director Donna Kiel, a former Catholic school principal and counselor.

"They have limited funds to hire a counselor. For many principals, it's often the choice, 'Do I have a counselor, or do I have an art teacher?'"

Emphasizing the importance of social-emotional well-being along with academic rigor is critical, says Melissa Ockerman, associate professor of counseling.

"There's been such a focus on academics and testing," she says. "But if people are not well, including teachers who suffer a lot of vicarious trauma and carry this weight if there aren't counselors to do the work, we find ourselves in a difficult situation."

Teachers undergo training in online learning modules that detail the five pillars of SEL competency—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making—as well as trauma-informed teaching aligned with Catholic values.

Modules are tailored so teachers can incorporate them into their work. Teachers also receive personalized coaching by counseling faculty, including Ockerman and associate professors Alexandra Novakovic and Rebecca Michel, and two alumni and former winners of National School Counselor of the Year awards, Brian Coleman (MEd '14) and Kirsten Perry (MEd '11), as well as school counselor and



Sister Mary Paul McCaughey, O.P., helped launch the COR program.

licensed professional counselor Brea Adams (MEd '11).

"The modules focus on the teacher first," says Kiel. "They ask, 'Am I self-aware?' 'How am I working through whatever stress I might have, and how do I impart that with my students?' 'How can my coach help me with those questions that will guide me to the deepest level of practical self-awareness on a regular basis?'" Tools are provided to help teachers implement what they learn.

Ultimately, Kiel and Ockerman hope the program can be expanded throughout the more than 200 archdiocese schools. Success will also depend on creating permanent SEL task forces in each school that transform communities into cultures of care.

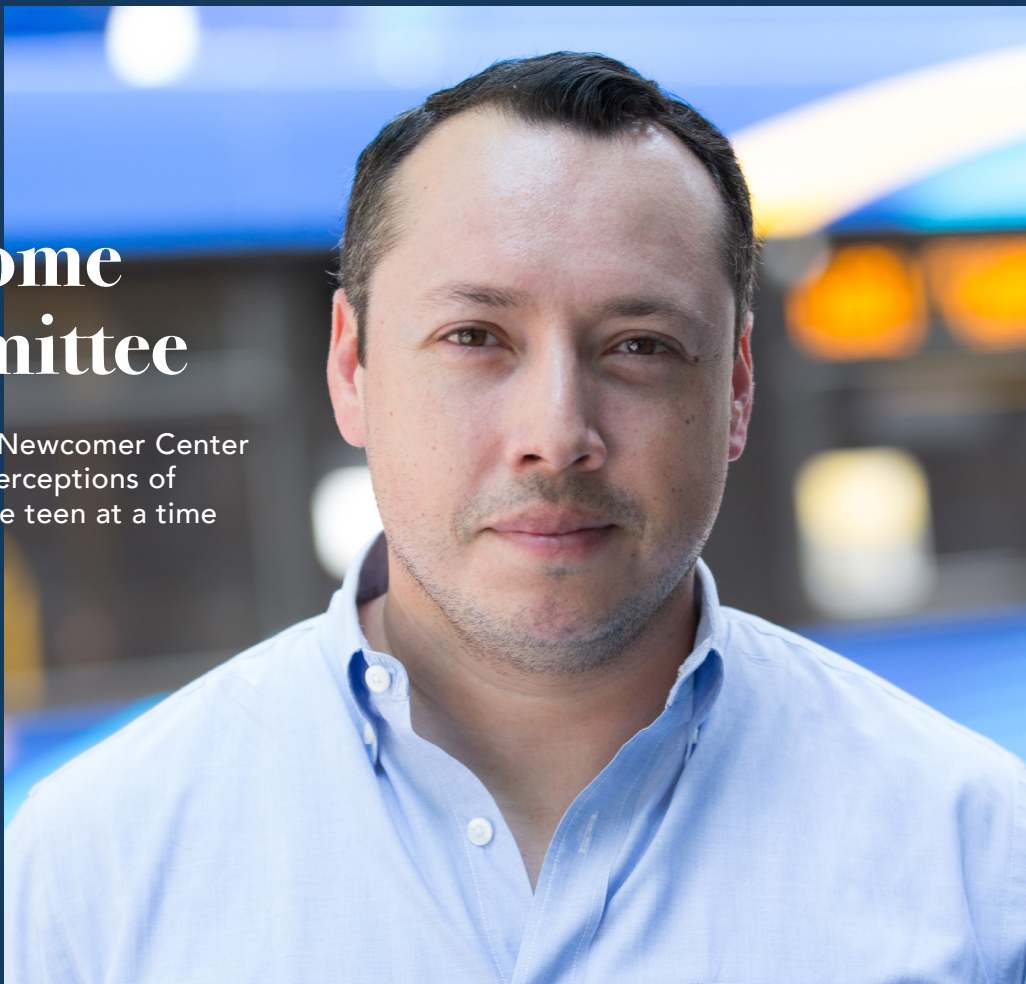
"We want them to look at certain data and ask, 'What are our discipline practices? How are we training our teachers? What kind of professional development do we offer?'" says Ockerman. "We're hitting on all levels—individual teachers, students and the full school—to make this change sustainable."



Donna Kiel taught a pre-pandemic workshop on social-emotional learning for Catholic school educators.

Welcome Committee

Mario Perez's Newcomer Center is reshaping perceptions of immigrants one teen at a time



The Newcomer Center, an English language learner high school cofounded in 2003 by Mario Perez (EDU '00, MED '05) in Arlington Heights, Ill., gives its immigrant students and their families an opportunity to be successful in America, and to see themselves as agents for change regardless of language ability. We asked Perez, the school's coordinator and lead teacher, what makes this successful model so transformative.

How does the Newcomer Center work?

Our program is a launching pad for kids who are new to the country, with no acculturation and very little to no English. We feed into four high schools in our district. Students are here for up to two years and receive a full curriculum that includes accelerated math and English studies, and vocational class options. We also do a lot of restorative mental, physical and emotional practices.

Why are those restorative practices needed?

Over the last three years, the large Mexican population in our area has given way to a larger Central American group. We're seeing a lot of unaccompanied minors, kids from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras who have suffered great amounts of trauma in their lives. We have five boys who were victims of human trafficking. They live in a house of hospitality run by a Catholic church. About 75% of our students come from Latin America, but we have 14 countries represented, with seven languages spoken among the students.

It sounds like your teaching might cross over into social work.

We partner with other organizations that have a passion for

helping the underserved in our community. I make sure our Newcomer families have access to affordable health care, food pantries and legal advice. We also visit students in their homes to humanize a very foreign experience for them. They don't know American schools. They don't have advocates. Those needs have to be met before any learning happens. If we don't lessen those affective filters, especially for kids from war-torn areas and destabilized regions, how are they going to learn English?

Do you have a background in multicultural education?

I'm a two-time Fulbright scholar and did their Teachers for Global Classrooms fellowship with a field experience in the Republic of Georgia. I also studied Germany's educational and vocational system for refugee students. I try to find ways to incorporate those ideas into best practices at the Newcomer Center.

Do you relate to your students in other ways?

My parents came to the U.S. from Mexico, initially to provide a better life for my older brother, who has special needs. I'm the first of seven siblings to graduate from college.

How do you reframe the immigration conversation?

By making sure our students see themselves as agents for change. They've tutored AP non-native Spanish students at nearby high schools, made blankets for terminally ill children at the hospital and written letters to Liberation Library, which gives incarcerated youth in Illinois access to literacy. The only way we can combat misplaced ideas of what immigrants are taking is by creating and owning a narrative of how we're contributing.



Darrick Tovar-Murray (far right, front) advises staff and community members at South Africa's Good Work Foundation.

Affability in Africa

A counseling professor builds a social-emotional framework at a rural community service center

As charity is the virtue which unites us as members of the one body, affability is the virtue which perfects that union," wrote St. Vincent de Paul.

The research of Darrick Tovar-Murray, associate professor of counseling, is centered on that Vincentian ideal. The result was his book "Basic Therapeutic Counseling Skills: Interventions for Working with Clients' Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors."

The text centers on such affability-promoting ideas as counselors understanding the client's private world, developing therapeutic listening and responding skills, and working with the client's thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

He fulfilled the charitable portion of St. Vincent's advice by volunteering for two weeks last February in South Africa's Mpumalanga Province at the Good Work Foundation, which offers educational and career-related programs using digital technology to community members and rural primary schools.

His trip's purpose was threefold. First, Tovar-Murray wanted to help advance the foundation's educational and counseling offerings by putting his research into action through a facilitative training program he based on his book.

Tovar-Murray says he wanted to help the staff develop "empathy, unconditional positive regard and genuineness to support the educational and social-emotional needs" of clients.

Second, Tovar-Murray provided professional career consultation to community members and staff involved with the educational programs Good Work Foundation offers at its main campus in Hazyview, and at its satellite campuses throughout the province.

The final aim of Tovar-Murray's work "was to provide emotional support for the staff," who met with him to "discuss daily life considerations," he says. "I developed a successful Black male support group for the staff," which "focused on Afrocentric world view and Black racial identity development." He used "an Afrocentric counseling framework to help the staff at Good Work Foundation understand their identity formation and development."

Donna Kiel, director of the Office of Innovative Professional Learning (OIPL), helped facilitate Tovar-Murray's trip. She notes that the mission of her office "is to extend the expertise of the faculty to all those in need. My research interest in innovative educational models introduced me to Kate Groch, the founder of the Good Work Foundation." When Kiel learned of the foundation's "need for support of their school facilitators, I brought together Dr. Tovar-Murray and Kate," she says.

Besides assisting the foundation, Tovar-Murray's trip positively affected both him and the college.

"This experience broadened my understanding of multiculturalism and offered me practical experience for addressing international and global affairs," he says. "It also advanced my theoretical framework on diversity and provided me with important multicultural knowledge, awareness and skills that I will incorporate in my professional work. It is my hope that I will be able to develop courses in multiculturalism that will allow counseling students to gain international experiences."

Kiel notes that OIPL will continue to work with the foundation "to extend the connection to COE to include our graduate and undergraduate students. We are working on a virtual program to provide the faculty and Good Work teachers with the opportunity for exchange of professional learning."



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